

Oct 17, 1923

I want to say just a word or two this morning about some of the things concerning the inside work in the college. I like to make this talk early in the college year. We are going to have visitors from time to time to come to college, and they are going to want to see some of the things that are going on in the class room. They are going to want to see some of the work. Just how many visitors we will have I do not know. If I come into a class room (you know I am a sensitive man, don't turn around and look at me, it is terribly embarrassing). Did you ever go into any place and every body turn and look at you right straight.

One time Sam Jones was conducting a meeting (not the Sam Jones that we have out here on the grounds). At that time people used to wear those cutaway coats made out of black cloth with steaks in it, and there was a young fellow up toward the front of the tent with one of those suits on, and he got up and started to walk down a good long aisle, and Sam stopped in the midst of his sermon, and looked at that fellow and says he certainly has got on a pretty good suit of clothes, and every body in the tent looked at him and he couldn't make it to the back of the tent, he had to sit down, he couldn't get to the back of the tent. You see how embarrassing it was.

I come into the class room and everything stops and looks at me. I am no curiosity in this college. I don't want you to notice me. Don't even look at me. Don't let any person interfere with your class room work. If my coming into a class room is going to break up the continuity of thought then instead of being helpful I am really a disturbing factor. Go right on with your work. If I want to see any of you I will be sure to let you know it. Absolutely ignore me, and ignore all of those that go with me. Now that is the thing you ought to do, not only as a student here, but when you become a teacher. You may have a supervisor, a supervisor who doesn't want to break up the class room work, so when he or she comes in let the work go right on. If the supervisor wants to talk to you, why she will let you know, and if she doesn't want to talk to you then she wants to see how the work is going. Form the habit while you are here, don't pay any attention to visitors, let them come into the room if they wish to, and let them find a seat, but you hold your mind on the class room work. You know that is the way to make a good citizen as well as a good student. Have something definite to do in life and stick to the job; that is the way to success; that is the way to accomplish life's purpose, and I want you to at least treat me that way. Treat me as I have outlined. When I come into the class room go right on with your work. It doesn't make any difference what is going on keep it up. You know I may want to see it, that may be the reason I came in. You may be doing something that is so interesting that I want to



see it. You are going to find, young women, as you go on through life, an awful lot of things to come across your pathway to pull you away from what you are doing. Don't turn aside, stick to your purpose. It is a good psychological exercise. You know there is some one in the room, you know something has taken place a little unusual, but you continue with your column of figures, and do not have to stop and start all over again. That's a good experience for you to have, so if I should go through the college any time, and I hope to do this some time soon. If I should be by myself or with some one else, ignore me absolutely. I want to go into every class room here. I just want to see how you are getting along. If I should go by myself or with some else I want you to absolutely ignore me. Hold to your class room work. You have only 45 minutes to a period. If I take five of it you have only  $8/9$  left, and that's a pretty good percent for me to take. I don't want that large a percent. I don't want to take 11 per cent of the class room period. It may be that there will be visitors without me. Treat them just like you treat me. Don't treat the other person any better than you treat home folks. Some times we have to do that but it isn't right.

Now about the middle of November we are going to have a section of the North Carolina Education Association here. They are going to meet right here in this building, and some of those people are going to want to see what **you** are doing. They will not want to see something specially prepared for them when they go around to class rooms. They will want to see the regular routine of work. If any of them go into class room you will make a better impression on them if you will go ahead with your regular work. Did I ever tell you about visiting the schools in Boston . I went with another high school principal ( I was a high school principal at that time) to visit the schools in Boston. We went to one of the best schools in Boston. Both of us wanted to see some work in American History and Civics. The principal of the school told us that at a certain period that morning we would find that work going in such and such a room.

Now, Boston, you know at that time was the Athens of America. Now this was the teacher that the principal of the school had selected for visitors to see, and of course we were expecting to find something really worth while. At the appointed hour we went into the room, took our seats. There was a woman teaching. She was a little taller than this reading stand and fully as large around. She said, girls I see we have some visitors this morning. Now less tell them what we have been doing this year, and they started back at the beginning, and they kept on talking about what they had been doing during the year. The gentleman who was visiting with me said "Wright, shall we go, I said "no, less stick it out and see what she is going to do when she gets through with this. We were not



polite enough to leave. Well, she went through the history of all they had done during the year, and she had 15 minutes left on her hands, and she didn't know what to do with it because she had visitors, but she finally had to get down to that day's lesson, and that day's lesson dealt with citizenship, and in that 15 minutes she revealed the fact to us that she herself did not know that she was a citizen of the United States. She revealed in that 15 minutes that she was absolutely unfit to teach government to American citizens. She didn't know that the native born girls in Boston was a citizen of the United States, and she was absolutely sure that a little child was not a citizen, and I left that room at the end of the period, because we staid through until the bell rang, I left that room feeling that she dodged the lesson because she knew she was incompetent. When we got out of the room my traveling companion says, "well, Wright what do you think of that? I says, well I can't express it until I get out of the building. I have had the feeling ever since that visit when I go into a class room, when they start back to give me a history of every thing they have done, I have a feeling they are not prepared to do any thing.

You don't want to create that impression. Each lesson is a unit, just as each brick is a unit that goes into the wall that makes a building. While each lesson is a unit that goes in the educational structure, that helps to make this structure, and we don't want to let visitors mar even one unit. We want them to be good brick and well laid. We want you to know when you leave here that you are actually American citizens. We don't want you to feel like those girls felt in that Boston school, that unless you could vote you are not a citizen (We went there before women could vote); that unless you can vote you are not a citizen. Citizenship and voting are not synonymous. It is a privilege that our government gives to its citizens and not a right, but this good woman in Boston (and I hope she was good) didn't know that.

Prepare each lesson so well that it will not make any difference in the world to you who comes in to hear you recite. more

Just one piece of experience and I will stop. You know I used to be guilty of teaching history and civil government. Well I was. One day in high school I was going on with my class room work- I happened to be teaching English History, three men came into the room with the principal of the school, they took their seats, and I went on with the work. I did just exactly waht I am asking you to do. I never stopped asking questions at all. I walked across where they were, shook hands with them, showed them to a seat while the boy was reciting, and when he finished I asked the next question I had planned to ask until this boy had finished.



I went on with that lesson until I was through with it.

I found out they were three Englishmen over in America trying to see how the American were teaching English history to the American boys. It was a good thing I didn't know who they were, it may be a good thing for you not to know some times who the visitors are or why they are there. Being Englishmen and being visitors, of course, they were very nice to me, for which I was thankful.

If I had changed one iota I would have made a bad impression on those people, and they would not have gotten out of that lesson the thing that they went to that school to get. They wouldn't have found out how I taught English history to American boys, and that is what they wanted to know, but I assured them before they left that they certainly saw it just like it goes on every day. I am glad to have people come to class room some time with just one thing in their minds. We want to know just how it is going on every day, and if you change they do not get what they come for.

I have visitors to come here occasionally, I take them to the college dining room, and do not nitify any one they are coming, because I want the visitors to see how you are fed every day. That gives to the visitors the correct idea of what the college stand for, and if it is in the higher school it gives a correct idea of what the lower school stands for, and that is being honest with the other fellow, and honesty pays.